The overall goal of the Virginia Riparian Buffer Implementation Plan is to ensure, to the extent feasible, that all streams and shorelines in the Commonwealth will be protected by an adequate riparian buffer. This program will be implemented state-wide. The agencies of the Commonwealth will work with interested organizations, businesses and private landowners to establish, enhance and maintain various kinds of riparian buffers, as appropriate for the setting and use of the land, recognizing that forested buffers are the ideal. The Commonwealth's commitment to restore 610 miles of riparian forested buffers within Virginia' s portion of the Chesapeake Bay watershed is an important subset of this overall plan. The following six major objectives and their associated strategies are highlighted in this plan to ensure the overall goal is achieved:

Restore Missing or Inadequate Riparian Buffers

- Identify restoration sites
- Develop local watershed-based plans for specific actions
- Establish education outreach to volunteer groups
- Provide sufficient planting stock
- Plant riparian buffers and provide maintenance information

Conserve Existing Riparian Buffers

- Document riparian forest buffer conservation on State-owned lands and National Forests
- Identify riparian forest buffers in easements held by Land Trusts and Conservancies
- Determine riparian forest buffers in easements due to local government tax breaks
- Determine riparian forest buffers in easements through USDA programs
- Establish education outreach to volunteer groups and individual landowners
- Coordinate goals and priorities with state and local integrated watershed management programs

Enhance Program Coordination and Accountability

- Establish a Virginia Riparian Buffer Work Group
- Obtain an Executive Order addressing riparian buffers on state-owned lands
- Develop Memoranda of Agreements
- Promote private sector involvement
- Designate the Department of Forestry and Soil and Water Conservation Districts as program field contacts who can coordinate buffer planning and funding assistance
- Provide a riparian buffer source book
- Initiate a single tracking system
- Develop a spot-check tracking database
- Establish a program to coordinate and support volunteer activities

Enhance Incentives

- Implement legislation authorizing tax breaks for riparian forest buffer lands
- As applications are submitted, use Water Quality Improvement Fund money to reimburse localities for revenue losses due to riparian buffer land tax breaks
- Seek legislation to exempt riparian forest buffers from estate taxes
- Encourage localities to use stormwater utility fees for establishing riparian buffers
- Seek Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Funds through the U.S. Department of Agriculture
- Consolidate and improve cost-share and grant programs
- Encourage flexibility in local zoning and subdivision requirements
- Promote expansion of local government land-use management tools
- Seek increased funding for conservation easements through the Open Space Lands Preservation Trust Fund
- Explore small business assistance programs as funding sources
- Establish recognition programs

Promote Education and Outreach

- Initiate a major public relations campaign in concert with the organization *American Forests*
- Promote private sector involvement
- Coordinate with young people's education programs
- Promote activities of local watershed organizations
- Increase demonstration areas in each tributary
- Provide public information through real estate companies and chambers of commerce
- Continue cross-training among participating state and federal agencies
- Link riparian forest buffer restoration data with the Virginia Geographic Information Network

Target, Track and Conduct Research

- Target riparian buffer efforts where the greatest benefits can be achieved for the costs
- Establish a riparian buffer-tracking program
- Develop a system to inventory and track progress
- Pursue riparian buffer research opportunities, including studies to determine the most effective methods of establishing adequate riparian buffers